

AUGUST 2025

Policing Leadership Academy (PLA)

The University of Chicago Crime Lab launched its Policing Leadership Academy (PLA) in May 2023. This first-of-its-kind education trains America's policing leaders working in some of our most violent neighborhoods.

ABOUT THE PLA

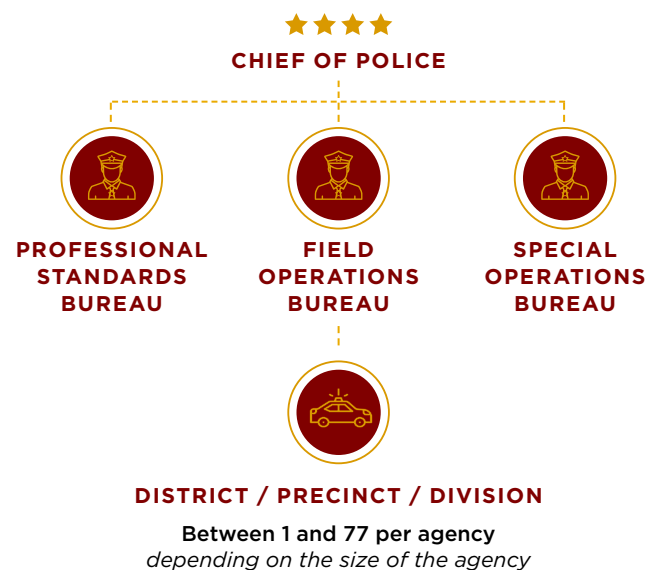
The PLA is a violence reduction initiative that aims to prevent violent crime, support officers, and improve fairness and effectiveness in policing. We do this by developing better police management practices nationwide and in select cities globally, with a focus on many of America's highest-violence geographies.

The academy, which is being rigorously evaluated to measure its effectiveness, addresses a persistent training gap by providing a five-month, robust management and leadership education to police at the commander level and at no cost to the department.

FOCUS ON POLICE COMMANDERS

Investing in law enforcement management education can transform public safety in an entire city simply by training a few handfuls of key people.

Currently, there are no national standards, curriculum, or best practices for training and supporting police commanders/ captains/majors – the rank that oversee police precincts and station houses. Police commanders don't directly supervise patrol officers – they supervise the supervisors and can exert much greater influence over local patrol behavior than department leadership. The PLA is the only police management and leadership education program in the country solely focused on this critical rank of police leader.



Responsible for:

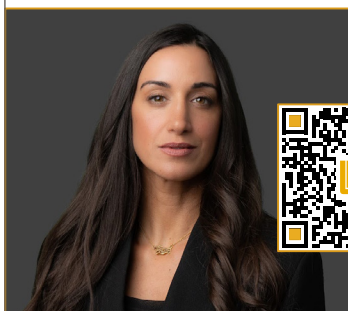
- Between 50-300 sworn officers
- Between 10-40 professional staff
- Between 4-300 sq miles
- Population: 30,000-300,000 people
- Works with two or more political officials on community problems (city council, alderperson, board of supervisor, etc.)
- Works with community leaders and business leaders.

The PLA builds on [prior research from the Crime Lab](#) showing that changes in police department management can drive reductions in both violent crime rates and police use of force. The five-month curriculum provides hands-on training in data-driven management, violence reduction, and community trust.

Participants also complete a capstone project, with the support of a dedicated capstone coach, focused on solving an entrenched issue in their home districts.

The map displays the following locations (from top to bottom, left to right):

- Seattle, WA
- Tacoma, WA
- Portland, OR
- Sacramento, CA
- San Francisco, CA
- Richmond, CA
- San Jose, CA
- Los Angeles, CA
- Los Angeles Sheriff's Department
- Phoenix, AZ
- Tucson, AZ
- Gila River Indian Community
- Albuquerque, NM
- San Carlos Apache Tribe
- Yavapai Nation
- Navajo Nation
- Boulder, CO
- Denver, CO
- Aurora, CO
- Lakewood, CO
- Wichita, KS
- Topeka, KS
- Kansas City, KS
- St. Louis, MO
- Fayetteville, AR
- Memphis, TN
- Arlington, TX
- Dallas, TX
- Waco, TX
- Austin, TX
- Houston, TX
- Louisiana State Police
- Baton Rouge, LA
- New Orleans, LA
- Jackson, TN
- Birmingham, AL
- Chattanooga, TN
- Atlanta, GA
- Albany, GA
- Tampa, FL
- North Miami, FL
- Miami, FL
- Miami-Dade County, FL
- DeKalb County, GA
- Charleston, SC
- North Charleston, SC
- Columbia, SC
- Charlotte-Mecklenburg, NC
- Asheville, NC
- Rocky Mount, NC
- Portsmouth, VA
- Fairfax County, VA
- Prince George's County, MD
- U.S. Capitol Police
- Washington, DC
- Montgomery County, MD
- Baltimore, MD
- Dover, DE
- Philadelphia, PA
- New York, NY
- Bridgeport, CT
- Providence, RI
- Boston, MA
- Worcester, MA
- Chicopee, MA
- Buffalo, NY
- Cleveland, OH
- Toronto, Canada
- Peel, Canada
- Detroit, MI
- Dayton, OH
- Battle Creek, MI
- Gary, IN
- Milwaukee, WI
- St. Paul, MN
- Rapid City, SD
- Madison, WI
- Chicago, IL
- Joliet, IL
- Indianapolis, IN
- Louisville, KY
- Knoxville, TN
- London, UK



CONTACT US

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Scan to visit our website crimelab.uchicago.edu

ENSURING WHAT WE TEACH WORKS

To test the PLA's effectiveness, researchers at the University of Chicago Crime Lab, the University of Pennsylvania, and Cornell University's Jeb E. Brooks School of Public Policy are conducting a multi-city, randomized controlled trial to measure the impact of investing in police commanders' leadership and management skills. The evidence generated by this work will inform policing leadership and educational initiatives for generations to come.